

REMARKS

Claims 1-24 and 30-48 are pending in this application. Claims 25-29 and 49-53 have been withdrawn.

In the Official Action of September 7, 2005, made final, claims 1-14, 17-38 and 41-48 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Chmielewski (U.S. Patent No. 6,068,620). This ground of rejection is respectfully traversed.

With respect to independent claims 1 and 30, the Examiner states that the reference discloses an absorbent article having the basic components of the presently claimed invention, including a multi-component absorbent core disposed between the top sheet and the back sheet of the garment. The Examiner further states that the multi-component absorbent core composite includes at least two different core units, referring to Figure 3 of the reference. Figure 3 of Chmielewski depicts an absorbent garment having an absorbent laminate **34**. The absorbent laminate **34** includes a central absorbent laminate **340** covered with a wrapping absorbent laminate **342**. Thus, the laminated absorbent core of the reference is effectively constructed by wrapping one core structure with another. This particular type of multi-component structure is very different from the multi-component laminate of the present invention.

In contrast to Chmielewski, the multi-component absorbent core of this invention is not in the form of one core unit wrapped around another core unit. Rather, applicant's invention is directed to a multi-component core structure comprising two (2) or more core units which are separate structures positioned in a lateral plane in side-to-side relationship. This is depicted in Figure 2 of the present specification which shows core units **286** and **288** disposed in a lateral side-to-side relationship. The core units of this invention have different properties from each other as provided on pages 6 and 7 of the present specification. This type of multi-component core structure is not disclosed in the Chmielewski reference.

Claims 15-16 and 39-40 also stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over the Chmielewski reference. This ground of rejection is also traversed.

The Examiner states that the use of a cellulose ester tow, while not described in Chmielewski, is nevertheless an obvious variation of the reference in the absence of a showing of

criticality or unexpected results. Applicants maintain that such a showing is unnecessary when a prima facie case of obviousness has not been established by the Examiner in the first instance.

In this regard, applicant maintains that the reference can be fundamentally distinguished from the present invention on the basis of a difference in structure of the multi-component core, supported by a difference in function. The core of the present invention is prepared by assembling two or more core units in a lateral side-by-side relationship within the garment. The core units of the present invention have different properties to permit reduced gel blocking and pressure build up in the garment. This type of core structure, and the advantages resulting therefrom, is neither taught nor suggested in the reference.

In view of the aforementioned facts and reasons, the present application is now believed to overcome the remaining rejections in this application, and to be in proper condition for allowance. Applicant submits that the above-identified amendments only serve to further clarify the claimed invention, and do not raise any additional issues or require any further consideration on the part of the Examiner. Accordingly, entry of the foregoing amendment, and reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection, is respectfully solicited. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below to discuss any matter pertaining to the status of this application.

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Respectfully submitted,

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